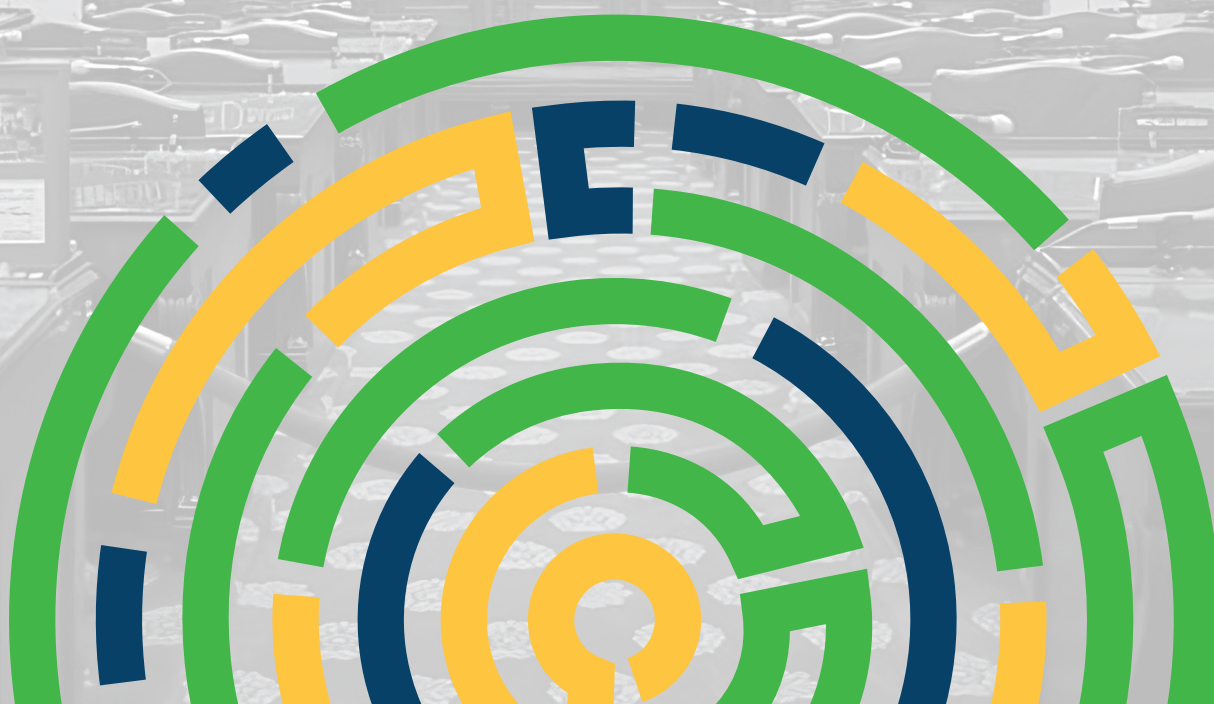


2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP: A SESSION FOR THE AGES

JUNE 2023



INTRODUCTION

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF A SESSION MARKED BY STEADY LEADERSHIP TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUITIES

At the beginning of the session, when MCLA co-convened a group of Latino organizations and leaders to present the Latino Public Policy Agenda under a larger umbrella we call the **Minnesota Latino Leadership Alliance (MiLLA)**, our Executive Director posed some questions regarding the likely impact of the historic surplus the state had accumulated: “What if? What if this money were used to close gaps in education, health, and wealth? What if this money were used to create sustainable jobs for everyone who calls Minnesota home? What if this money were used to ensure that every child has a home in a safe neighborhood and gets three square meals each day?” She also alluded to the fact that by properly and equitable investing in our communities, the state could create a second “Minnesota Miracle”. Two days after MCLA held its first in person [Latine Day at the Capitol](#) after the pandemic, Governor Tim Walz used the same words during his [State of the State Address](#) stating his vision for how his administration and the legislature would leverage a historic budget surplus for a new “Minnesota Miracle.”

Now we know the answers: when people and communities are at the center of policy-making, Government is able to deliver for the common good in an inclusive way.

The next state budget as passed will be \$71.5 billion, up 38 percent from the current \$52 billion two-year spending plan that expires in June. The Council’s overall assessment of this session is very positive. The outcomes signal that we are moving the needle towards more equity for Latinx communities while producing



a renewed “Minnesota Miracle” where every resident has a chance to thrive, live with dignity, safety, and a sense of belonging and possibilities.

The legislature and government acted courageously to take care of our immigrant neighbors and friends, by adopting many policy provisions, and making investments that will support

Latino communities and organizations. From restoring access to drivers’ licenses for all regardless of documentation or immigration status, to adding ITIN users to apply to tax benefits, and to expanding MNCare for undocumented Minnesota residents (legislation that MCLA has actively supported over the years), the legislature paved the road to prosperity for our diverse communities and for the state to develop the best educated and healthy workforce in the nation.

Among its main accomplishments, MCLA is very proud to have worked on a new iteration of the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) and with the Coalition of Teachers of Color to continue moving the needle

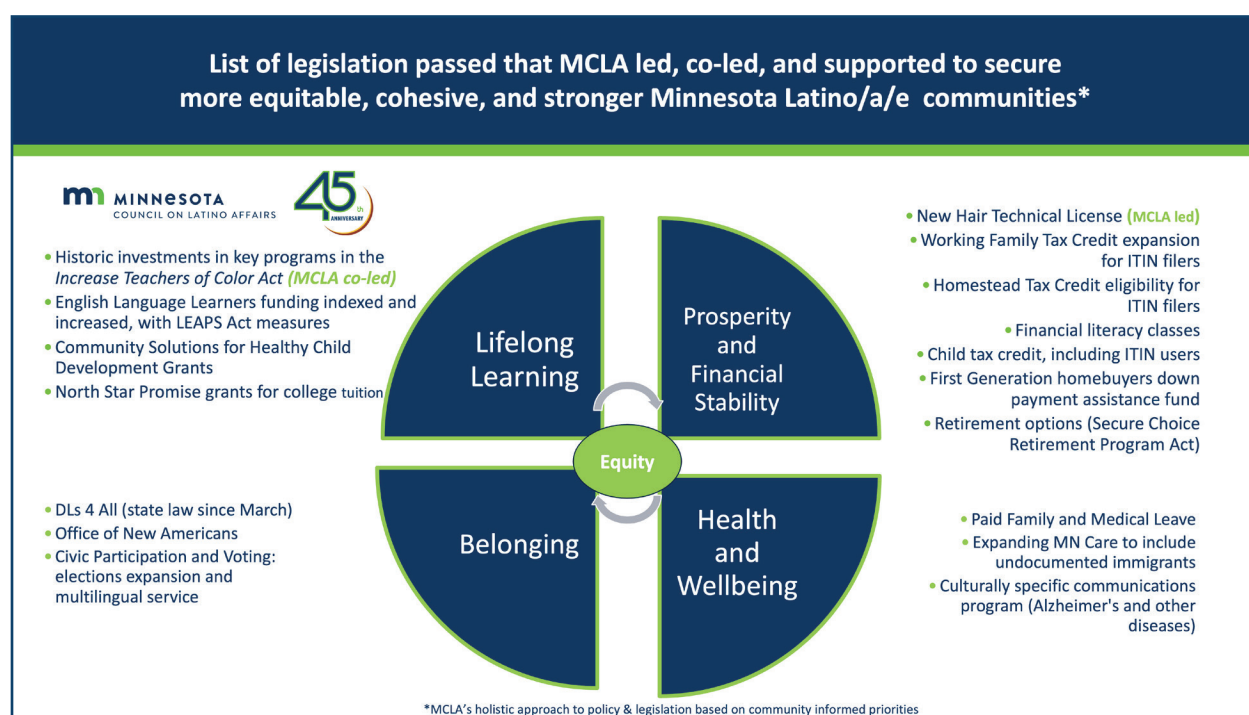
INTRODUCTION

a little bit farther so that the number of teachers of color continues to grow to represent our student body and positively affect their educational outcomes. More needs to be done, but this session saw a concrete response of our communities' demands and aspirations so everyone in Minnesota can thrive equitably.

MCLA is also very proud to have worked with a group of Latina cosmetologists to pass one of the Office of the Legislative Auditor's (OLA) recommendations in the cosmetology field. In 2021, the OLA [recommended](#) to remove barriers to occupations, specifically the creation of a Hair Technician License. This bi-partisan bill was authored by two of our current legislative council members, Rep. María Isa Pérez Vega and Sen. Alice Mann, and co-authored by two of our past council members, Rep. Jon Koznick and Senator Carla Nelson. This bill also had the support of Chairs Rep. Klevorn and Sen. Murphy.

MCLA believes that for Latino Minnesotans to thrive, policy and systems change need to be addressed holistically and silos between programs and systems need to be broken down. In 2018 MCLA created the Equity Blueprint for Latinos based on community listening sessions in every corner of the state. By listening to their concerns and suggestions, we proposed legislative solutions to prioritize and improve their overall wellbeing and opportunities to thrive in our state.

Below you will see the outcomes of this session pointing to that direction. Taken together, we are able to see progress that, if sustained, will help thousands of families in the state to recover from the pandemic and better endure the next challenges and crises, including a potential economic recession or workforce shortages.



We present a more detailed summary of some of the positive outcomes for Latino communities in our main policy areas of Lifelong Learning (education) and Prosperity and Financial Stability (Economic and Workforce Development) in the next sections.

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

LIFELONG LEARNING

E-12 EDUCATION

Increase Teachers of Color Act | E-12 H.F. 320/ S.F.619 and Higher Ed H.F.381/S.F.267

For the seventh successive year, the three State Ethnic Councils (SEC) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), under MCLA leadership, worked together in strong partnership with the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) to advocate for the Increase Teachers of Color Act of 2023.

Through multiple collaborations, MCLA provided both chamber's committees on Education and Higher Education with several joint letters of support for ITCA, as well as written and oral testimony during the committee hearing process. This support was supplemented by regular meetings with all four bill authors as well as committee chairs in both legislative bodies.

Of the four omnibus packages, the Senate Omnibus for E-12 (Sen. Kunesh, SF2684) was the most comprehensive iteration of ITCA. In Higher Education, the House Omnibus bill (HF2073, Rep. Pelowski) was the most comprehensive version of ITCA.

Session Outcomes

In partnership with the Coalition, MCLA adopted a guidance-focused strategy in support of ITCA provisions. In March, the Senate Education Policy Committee made history by approving almost all of the policy provisions in SF619, (Sen. Kunesh) in their omnibus bill. This is the first time since 2017, when ITCA was first introduced, that a Senate Education Committee adopted the language. The House Education Policy took similar action by adopting the language in HF320 (Rep. Hassan). By mid-May, after a 20-hour session on the Senate floor, the E-12 bill was passed with a 35/32 vote, while the Higher Education bill passed six days earlier with a 34/30 vote.



OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

Policy Sections in 2023 Increase Teachers of Color Act that were adopted

Amendments to existing statutes:

- World's Best Workforce definitions and requirements (120B.11, subdivision 1)
- State model policy for MDE to provide positive school climate resources (121A.031)
- Tier 3 & Tier 4 license eligibility for out-of-state applicants (122A.183, subdivision 1; 122A.184, subdivision 1)
- Licensure Exams (122A.185, subdivision 1)
- Probationary Periods for Teachers and District TOCAIT Reporting (sections 122A.40 & 122A.41)
- Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color (CUGMEC) Program grants (122A.635)
- Teacher Mentorship and Retention statute (122A.70)
- Require culturally responsive principal evaluation (123B.147, subdivision 3)
- Achievement & Integration Program (124D.861, subdivision 2)
- Teacher Shortage Loan Repayment program (136A.1791)

New Statutes (were previously proposed in 2022 ITCA, but not adopted):

- Establishing a state goal for annual increases to the percentage of BIPOC teachers by two percentage points along with a required report
- Closing Educational Opportunity Gaps grants program
- Prohibit discrimination against teachers for teaching about people from protected classes
- Prohibit American Indian school mascots
- Affirm the right to wear Tribal Regalia at Graduation Ceremonies



OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

ITCA proposed \$101.3M in total investment increases in FY24-25 for E-12 and \$45.8M total investment for three programs in Higher Ed. Below is the final appropriations in the E-12 and Higher Education Omnibus bills.

E12 Budget Proposals	Appropriated for FY22-23	FY24-25 Request	Appropriated for FY24-25 in HF2497 E-12 Omnibus Bill
Grow Your Own grants	\$13M	\$70M	\$50M
Collaborative Urban & Greater MN Educators of Color grants (CUGMEC)	\$2M	\$12M	\$10.880M
Teacher Mentorship and Retention	\$6M	\$7M	\$7M
American Indian Teacher Prep Grants	\$920K	\$750K	\$2.810M
Concurrent Enrollment—Intro to Teaching grants	\$1M	\$500K	\$500K
Closing Educational Opportunity Gaps grant	\$0	\$20M	\$6M
Come Teach in MN Grants	\$400K		\$600K
Teacher Recruitment Marketing Campaign	\$500K	\$1M	\$1M
Underrepresented Student Teacher Grants	\$0	\$1M	\$0
Aspiring MN Educators of Color	\$0	\$3M	\$0
Coalition to Increase TOCAIT in MN	\$0	\$400K	\$200K
PELSBI TOCAIT Reporting	\$0	\$60K	\$20K

Higher Ed Budget Proposals	Appropriated for FY22-23	FY24-25 Request	Appropriated for FY24-25 in HF2073 Higher Ed Omnibus Bill
Underrepresented Student Teacher grants	\$2.5M	\$5M	\$1.925M
Aspiring MN Educators of Color Scholarship	\$3M	\$37M	\$0
Teacher Shortage Loan Repayment Program	\$400K	\$17M	\$2M

Source: MCLA based on the Coalition of Teachers of Color analyses, Gov office data release and House bill summary

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

Outcomes if the following ITCA Provisions had passed

This session, the legislature did not allocate a single dollar to the Aspiring MN Educators of Color Scholarship. The educational system in Minnesota is facing a major teacher shortage that spans urban, suburban, and rural schools. Minnesota school systems report not being able to hire enough teachers in licensure shortage areas such as English as a Second Language, Early Childhood, Special Education, Career and Technical Education, STEAM, and World Languages. The Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship would have continued addressing this problem while simultaneously addressing the BIPOC teacher shortage. According to OHE's most recent report for the Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship, in Fall 2022, grant recipients taught in five out of six statewide shortage areas in education.

For FY23 the breakdown of student teacher applicants by race/ethnicity was as follows:

Race/Ethnicity	Applicants	Recipients
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	3
Asian	45	37
Black or African American	91	72
Hispanic or Latino	59	49
Two or More Races	18	14

Source: [Minnesota Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship Pilot Program, 2022 Report.pdf \(state.mn.us\)](#)

Licensure Area of Recipients	License Shortage Area
Academic Behavioral Strategist	Yes
Early Childhood Education	Yes
English as a Second Language	Yes
World Language: Spanish and Chinese	Yes
Early Childhood Education Special Ed	Yes
Social Studies	Yes
Elementary Education	No

MCLA strongly urges for increased funding for the Aspiring MN Educators of Color Scholarships as data collected by PELSB shows an increase of applicants every year, from 140 eligible applicants in 2021 to 197 in 2022 and only enough funds to be disbursed to 175 applicants.

The impact of the Increase Teachers of Color Act thus far has resulted in the state's more than 30 teacher preparation programs being more diverse than the current teacher workforce, with 11% of all program completers and 17% of all teacher candidates coming from BIPOC communities. Full investment in BIPOC student teachers will help remove the most significant barrier to licensure for approximately

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

330 completing their programs. However, there are 2,140 BIPOC teacher candidates who will not be supported with scholarships before student teaching, which is why we strongly continue recommending full funding for ITCA.

On a separate but related note, another provision equally important to hire and retain qualified teachers of color was the determination to keep a pathway to permanent licensure for educators with demonstrated success as Tier 2 licensed teachers, but only for candidates enrolled in official teacher preparation programs, or those who already hold a master's degree. This measure eliminated other alternative pathways to Tier 2 licensure.

English Learner Revenue and Funding in the LEAPS Act | H.F. 22/ S.F.21

Ensuring that English Learners (ELs) have access to quality education has long been a priority of the MCLA and Latine community at large. In 2014, the Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act was passed into law, with the Council's support. At the time, the LEAPS act was the nation's most comprehensive legislation in support of ELs. The law was successfully embedded into many existing statutes, including teacher licensure, early education, curriculum and instruction, higher education, and adult education.

H.F. 22 (Rep. Her)/S.F.21 (Sen. Oumou Verbeten) increased the EL Program revenue from \$704 to \$1228 for FY23 and fully funding the program by FY27. LatinoLead along with MCLA sought to incorporate specific language into the bill to ensure resources are used for quality ELL instruction and practices. This would establish proportional revenue increases automatically and would ensure that the progress of the LEAPS Act, which became Minnesota law in 2014, would not stagnate.

HIGHER EDUCATION

North Star Promise | H.F. 783/ S.F.1986

Senator Omar Fateh held a strategy meeting to discuss how to support free public college, with the participation of COPAL and MCLA, among others. MCLA provided input on language around residency status, income guidelines and asked for data from other states that had implemented similar bills. MCLA also played a supportive role during their rally at the Capitol. The bill did not have a hearing in the House, but was adopted into the Higher Ed omnibus bill during conference committee.

According to the most recent US Census, the median household income of Latine families is about \$58,000 and about four in five Latine Minnesotans (79%) are U.S. citizens. The North Star Promise would provide free college tuition at Minnesota's public colleges to residents whose family income is less than \$80,000 annually, starting in the 24-25 academic year. This would remove the financial barrier our community faces when pursuing a Higher Education degree.

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

In summary, the 2023 Legislative session had the largest investment in English Language Learners along with the highest implementation of policy proposals from ITCA. Hence, we remain hopeful that these investments and policies will make schools more inclusive and Latine students more likely to be academically successful. Other critical pieces of legislation that passed and will improve our students' readiness to learn and secure their academic success are: universal school meals signed into law in March; the Read Act (a literacy policy for students, including evidence-based instruction, universal screenings for reading fluency and dyslexia with about \$75 million in funding); reducing disparities in discipline, banning suspensions for K-3 and eliminating the use of seclusion in PreK-3. Equally important, Ethnic Studies in all K-12 schools, beginning in 2026-2027, also passed this session. These courses may be used for credit toward graduation. Finally, a new Child Tax Credit (up to \$1,750 per child for those under income thresholds, including ITIN filers) and the expansion of the K-12 Education Tax Credits (also expanded to up to \$1500 per child) are worthy of including.

However, the need is greater than the support received to close the equity gaps in education. Minnesota has one of the nation's worst education achievement gaps between BIPOC and white students. In 2019, it ranked 50th for racial disparities in high school graduation rates. As our student population gets increasingly diverse, the diversity of our teaching workforce has not kept pace with student diversity. The percentage of BIPOC students in Minnesota has increased from 30% to 37%, but the percentage of BIPOC teachers has only increased from 4% to 6%. This translates to 1 to 9 ratio of white teachers to white students, while the ratio for BIPOC teachers to BIPOC students is 1 to 90.

If we are to reach Minnesota's educational attainment goal and increase percentage of BIPOC teachers, we must create comprehensive systemic changes that include accountability measures and proper funding, but more importantly that are guided by the community that will be impacted.



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OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND PROSPERITY

The momentous 2023 legislative session has witnessed the passing of a series of legislation that will have a significant impact on the economic wellbeing and advancement of all Minnesotans, including Latino/e¹ individuals and families. The policies and appropriations adopted by the Minnesota's legislature and the Walz-Flannagan Administration represent critical progress in fostering financial empowerment and addressing existing economic disparities in the state.

One of the focuses of the Council's advocacy efforts during this legislative session has been to amplify the voices of our community in the legislative process, advocate for legislation to create more economic opportunities and remove barriers for Latino/e Minnesotans and celebrate the contributions our communities make toward the state's overall economic prosperity. Our legislative priorities in the area of economic development and workforce development encompassed a robust list of bills led, co-led, supported, studied, and monitored by the Council, with potential impacts for Latino/e taxpayers, workers, business owners, professionals, students, families, and the state's economic development as a whole. An in-depth exploration of these bills' impacts and an analysis of the work that lies ahead of us are offered below.



¹ MCLA uses Latine/x or Latino/a interchangeably to be gender neutral and inclusive.

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

Removing Occupational Barriers: New Hair Technician License

Recognizing the need for reform in Minnesota's beauty industry, the Council led a bill to create a new 'Hair Technician' license. Under the current cosmetology licensing system, individuals wishing to provide hair services are required to obtain a full cosmetology license, which mandates 1,550 hours of instruction and training in nails, skin care, and hair. This requirement posed several challenges, which we have heard directly from a group of Latina cosmetologists:

- **Extensive Financial Commitment:** The total cost to achieve a cosmetology license averages over \$17,000. This considerable financial commitment posed a significant barrier to entry for many individuals, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Time:** The mandatory training required approximately a year to complete, representing a significant time investment before the individual could start working and earning income.

The Council successfully advocated for the creation of the new hair technician license as part of the State and Local government omnibus bill. This new specialized license will go into effect in 2024 and focuses on equipping professionals with the specific skills needed for hair services and removing the requirement for training in unrelated areas. The new license serves two crucial purposes:

- **Reducing Financial Commitment:** By eliminating unnecessary training and focusing solely on hair services, the 'Hair Technician' license significantly reduces the cost associated with professional certification in the beauty industry.
- **Removing Barriers to Entry:** This streamlined approach not only makes the licensing process more affordable but also quicker, thereby encouraging more aspiring hair professionals, including those from BIPOC community, to join the industry.

This legislative win marks a significant step toward making the beauty industry more accessible and inclusive, fostering greater economic opportunity, and aligning professional training more closely with the actual career aspirations of individuals in Minnesota.

Financial Literacy

As part of the Financial Literacy Coalition of Minnesota (FLCM), we advocated for financial literacy courses for high school students. Only 7% of Minnesota high school students are currently required to take a personal finance course of at least one semester prior to graduation.² The passage of high school personal finance represents a substantial advancement in addressing the financial knowledge gap prevalent among our youth. This legislation mandates financial literacy education for all high school students as a graduation requirement to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to make informed financial decisions. The importance of financial literacy was emphasized during our 2022 community engagement listening sessions where our youth participants highlighted it as one of the key issues affecting them.

² [NGPF, State of Financial Education, 2022](#)

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

MN Secure Choice Program: Fostering Economic Mobility

The passage of the MN Secure Choice Program is another remarkable achievement with the potential to impact approximately 775,000 Minnesotan workers currently without a retirement plan. This retirement program is set to begin operation by January 2025 and is funded by an initial appropriation of \$5 million. Despite Latinos in Minnesota having one of the highest labor force participation rates, almost 46% of Latino workers lack access to an employer-provided retirement plan. This program will offer a retirement savings option that is inclusive and accessible to all workers, regardless of their employment status or income level. By facilitating retirement savings and wealth accumulation, this program can help bridge the wealth gap that disproportionately affects Latino/e workers and families.

In collaboration with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and Senator Pappas' office, we successfully amended the MN Secure Choice Program bill to ensure the provision of program information in various languages, including in Spanish. Our goal was to ensure that comprehensive education and outreach for employers and workers regarding the program would be accessible and culturally appropriate, reflecting the diverse languages and cultures of the state's workforce.

First Generation Homebuyer Down Payment Assistance

Access to affordable housing and affordable homeownership plays a vital role in the wellbeing, prosperity, and stability of our communities. In this legislative session, the goal of increasing Minnesota's supply of affordable housing was prioritized through substantial investments in new housing construction projects, programs helping to reduce disparities in homeownership, and through expanding access to rental assistance.

With an unprecedented \$1 billion housing investment, the state legislators acknowledged that affordable and accessible housing is fundamental to developing a resilient workforce and a secure community. The newly signed legislation directs significant funding towards new housing infrastructure, the expansion of rental aid, and initiatives designed to make homeownership more accessible and equitable.

These investments also aim to address deeply ingrained racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership rates in Minnesota. As noted by the American Community Survey (ACS), Latino/e homeownership rate in Minnesota is 57%, which is significantly lower than the 78% figure for white non-Hispanics, according to 2021 statistics³. These glaring discrepancies echo the legacy of discriminatory practices that have perpetuated wealth gaps and housing inequalities.

To redress this, the housing investment bill includes targeted assistance programs, such as the First-Generation Homebuyers Down Payment Assistance Fund, to empower historically disadvantaged communities. This program addresses one of the largest barriers to homeownership: a lack of savings and intergenerational wealth – a result of historical barriers to homeownership – by offering financial support for down payments for first-time homeowners whose parents or legal guardians did not own a home. It is anticipated that this program will support 5,000 Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) first-generation homebuyers over the next three years and shift the state's racial homeownership gap national ranking six places, from the 5th largest disparity in the nation to the 11th largest.

³ S2502: *Demographic characteristics for occupied housing units, Minnesota, ACS 2021. U.S. Census Bureau.*

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Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

Expansion of Homestead Classification and Homestead Credit Refund

Recognizing the deep-seated housing disparities in Minnesota, besides closely monitoring the First-Generation Homebuyers Down Payment Assistance program, the Council supported the expansion of Homestead classification and the Homestead Credit refund to Individual Taxpayers Identification Number (ITIN) filers.

In the context of property taxes in Minnesota, a homestead classification means that a home is classified as a primary residence for tax purposes. The tax rate for homestead properties is typically lower than for other property classes. This can lead to significant tax relief for homeowners. In addition to the lower tax rate, the homestead classification may qualify the homeowners for other benefits such as the Property Tax Refund and renters' credit.

Expanding homestead applications to include ITIN filers represents an important step towards greater parity between taxpayers with an ITIN and those with a Social Security Number (SSN). Minnesotans who use ITINs play vital roles in our communities and economy, and do their part to fund our schools, roads and bridges, and other public services we all count on. Their exclusion from certain tax policies means that Minnesotans who file with ITINs may be paying more in taxes than their neighbors who file their taxes with Social Security Numbers.

Under the new rule, an estimated 3,300 households filing with ITINs would qualify for homestead status, and of these 1,900 would qualify for the Homestead Credit Refund.

This expansion acknowledges the need for more inclusive policies that recognize the diverse demographic of today's homeowners. By widening the accessibility of the Homestead Tax Credit Refund, the legislation aims to reduce racial disparities in homeownership rates and promote housing equity. The Homestead Credit Refund and expansion stands as a significant investment in housing stability for Minnesota homeowners and allows families and individuals to spend their incomes on essential items such as groceries, transportation, clothing, utilities, and other necessary expenses. Through these progressive measures, Minnesota takes important strides towards closing the racial homeownership gap.

Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC)

The legislative session also witnessed the expansion of the Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) to ITIN filers who were previously excluded due to not having an SSN. This landmark expansion acknowledges the economic contributions of mixed-status families within the Latino community, providing critical financial support that improves overall well-being and fosters financial stability. The expansion of the WFTC would provide access to an estimated 8,200 Minnesota households with ITINs could gain eligibility.

Following the expansion of the Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC) to include ITIN filers, another significant development during the legislative session was the creation of a new Child Tax Credit (CTC). This initiative recognizes the substantial impact that tax credits can have on improving health and educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children. Research has consistently shown that poverty reduction measures,

OUTCOMES IN MCLA MAIN POLICY AREAS:

Lifelong Learning and Prosperity and Financial Stability

such as the CTC, can enhance health and educational outcomes for children. Of particular concern is the high number of Latino children in the state living below the poverty line, estimated at over 18,000 for those under 18, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS).⁴ The implementation of the CTC offers a promising solution to alleviate poverty rates within these vulnerable communities, leading to significant improvements in the lives of Latino children and their families.

Rebate Checks

The Minnesota legislature also approved new tax rebate checks, although in smaller amounts than the ones Governor Walz proposed. Under the passed version, Minnesotans who made up to \$75,000 a year in 2021 (or \$150,000 as a married couple) would receive a \$260 tax rebate (or \$520 for a couple). The one-time rebate could be higher for families with children or dependents.

Support for Latino Organizations

The Council supported new appropriations to fund key Latino organizations such as LEDC, LatinoLEAD, COPAL, CLUES, and ACHLA. These are not-profit, community-based organizations that play a vital role in addressing the needs and empowering the voices of Latino/e communities. Thus, the appropriation of public funding for these organizations in the final Jobs, Economic Development, Labor and Industry Omnibus Bill and the Education Omnibus Finance Bill is instrumental in supporting Latinx-centric community and workforce development projects and fostering a supportive ecosystem for the Latinx communities in Minnesota. The total appropriations for the biennium for these organizations, in addition to the Latino Chamber of Commerce Minnesota, totals \$7,000,000 for the FY24-25 biennium.

Another positive outcome for Latino organizations was the appropriation of capital funds for LEDC and CLUES' buildings in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, which combined amount to \$7.048 million.

Office of New Americans within DEED

MCLA supported and advised the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) on the establishment of the Office of New Americans (ONA) under DEED. This office is designed to connect Minnesota's immigrant workers with resources and training to help them navigate the barriers they face in the workforce. As part of our efforts, the MCLA will be part of the Interdepartmental Coordinating Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and will advise the Office of New Americans on issues related to Latinx immigrants' needs.



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⁴ [U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Poverty Status in The Past 12 Months By Sex and Age \(Hispanic or Latino\).](#)

MOVING FORWARD

The 2023 legislative session's achievements provide momentum for future progress and highlighted the path towards an equitable future for all Minnesotans. It is our anticipation that these new pieces of legislation will lead to significant positive impacts for Latine Minnesotans on the short, medium, and long terms. In the coming months, our focus will be on partnering with key stakeholders to support, evaluate, and advice on the implementation of these new laws and programs, with an eye on ensuring accessibility, equity, culturally appropriate outreach and education, and continued advocacy to address issues that disproportionately affect our communities.





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